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Message Text

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PAGE 01 TRIPOL 00253 231447Z
ACTION H-03

INFO OCT-01 AID-01 SS-07 NEA-07 NSC-06 ISO-00 EUR-08 /033 W
----------231514 012346 /44
R 231413Z FEB 77
FM AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4101
INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY TUNIS

UNCLAS TRIPOLI 0253

CODEL SYMMS

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: OREP (SYMMS, STEVEN D)
SUBJ: CONGRESSMAN SYMMS VISITS LIBYA

1. CONGRESSMAN SYMMS ARRIVED TRIPOLI FEBRUARY 14 HEADING SIX MEMBER IDAHO DELEGATION ON WEEK-LONG GOODWILL TOUR OF LIBYA. VISIT WAS ARRANGED BY JIM ARAJI, IRAQI-AMERICAN FROM UNIVERSITY OF IDAHO, AND AHMAD SHAHATI, DIRECTOR OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE LIBYAN PEOPLE'S CONGRESS SECRETARIAT. VISIT WAS HIGHLIGHTED BY MEETING WITH QADHAFI WHERE QADHAFI EXPRESSED HIS DESIRE FOR IMPROVED RELTIONS WITH US. SYMMS DELEGATION ALSO MET WITH A NUMBER OF LARG MINISTERS HEADED BY MINSTATE FONAFFS TURAYKI. VISIT CONCLUDED WITH RECEPTION GIVEN BY CHARGE AT RESIDENCE FOR HIGH-LEVEL LARG OFFICIALS INVOLVED IN SYMMS VISIT.

2. QADHAFI, TURAYKI AND SHAHATI ALL TOLD SYMMS THAT DELEGATION'S VISIT TO LIBYA WAS FIRST STEP IN IMPROVING RELATIONS BETWEEN THE US AND LIBYA. "ALLEGED" LIBYAN SUPPORT FOR TERRORISM WAS NEXT ITEM ON THE LARG AGENDA -- QADHAFI SAID THAT "IMPRESSION GIVEN ABROAD IS EXACTLY OPPOSITE TO OUR POSITION, SINCE OUR RELIGION
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DOES NOT PERMIT AN ACT OF TERRORISM." TURAYKI SAID THAT HIJACKED PLANES WERE ONLY ALLOWED TO LAND IN LIBYA BECAUSE INNOCENT PASSENGERS WERE THREATENED. TURAYKI SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED THAT AIRCRAFT HIJACKED BY JAPANESE RED ARMY FROM MALAYSIA WAS PERMITTED TO LAND IN LIBYA ONLY AFTER JAPANESE GOVT REQUESTED IT. TURAYKI ALSO MENTIONED TO SYMMS THAT LARG HAD TOLD

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PLO THAT LIBYA OPPOSED ACTS OF TERRORISM AND
HIJACKINGS INVOLVING "INNOCENT" VICTIMS.

3. US MIDEAST POLICY WAS ALSO RAISED BY LIBYAN
OFFICIALS. TURAYKI COMPLAINED THAT "TIES BETWEEN US
AND ISRAEL WERE STRONGER THAN THOSE BETWEEN WASHINGTON
AND HAWAII OR ALASKA."

4. QADHAFI TOLD CONGRESSMAN SYMMS THAT C-130 AIRCRAFT
WERE LIBYAN PROPERTY AND SHOULD BE RELEASED BY USG
FOR DELIVERY TO LIBYA. HE SAID THE C-130S WOULD NOT
BE USED FOR MILITARY PURPOSES BUT RATHER WERE FOR
TRANSPORT OF SHEEP AND AGRICULTURAL COMMODITIES.

5. VISIT CONCLUDED WITH SMALL RECEPTION HOSTED BY
CHARGE AT RESIDENCE FOR CONGRESSMAN AND SEVERAL HIGH-
LEVEL LARG OFFICIALS INVOLVED IN SYMMS VISIT. LIBYAN
OFFICIALS ATTENDING INCLUDED MFA UNDERSECRETARY SHAABAN
AS WELL AS A NUMBER OF PEOPLE'S CONGRESS OFFICIALS,
HEADED BY FONAFF DIRECTOR AHMED SHAHATI.
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Automatic Decaptioning: X
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Disposition Comment:
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Executive Order: N/A
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TAGS: OREP, (SYMMS, STEVEN D)
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